

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS****REGULAR MEETING****Monday, February 9, 2004**

Present: Bob Aldrich, Dennis Brunner, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Bobbie Harris, Janet Miller

Absent: June Bailey

Also Present: Martha Garcia; Delia Jackson; Francisco Banuelos; Larry Ross; Pastor Don Wharton, Dawson United Methodist Church; Mike North, Law Department; Doug Kupper and Maryann Crockett (staff)

First Vice President Miller called the meeting to order at approximately 3:32 p.m. The minutes of the regular meeting of January 12, 2004, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Land Exchange near Pat Garcia Memorial Park**. First Vice President Miller stated that the District Advisory Board (DAB) VI would consider this item at their February 18th meeting. Director Kupper commented that park staff has visited the proposed real estate exchange site south of 25<sup>th</sup> Street. He said access onto the property for both maintenance and development purposes was not ideal, but that it could be worked out. He said his biggest concern was that the City did not pay for any of the land known as Pat Garcia Park and that he was hesitant to trade any of the lots donated for the park because it might make it difficult to obtain land donations in the future.

Bob Aldrich commented that he had also looked at the area. He said besides the area being separated from the rest of the park, he was concerned about the location of the parcel so close to 25<sup>th</sup> Street and the bridge. He said he was also concerned about the adjacent dwellings being located right up against the utility easement and how that would affect using the easement as a roadway for entrance/exit onto the parcel.

Dennis Brunner asked if there were any stipulations on the land that was donated for Pat Garcia Park. Director Kupper said no. Dennis Brunner indicated that he too had toured the site and that he didn't like to see the "dump site" (parcel being offered for exchange) across the street from Pat Garcia Park and mentioned that he would like to see the area cleaned up and perhaps used as a park. Responding to a question, Director Kupper indicated that there was a precedent for separate park areas and mentioned Otis and Prospect Parks, which were located north and south of 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

First Vice President Miller asked if anyone from the public wished to speak on the issue. The following individuals spoke:

- Martha Garcia – indicated that she was Pat Garcia's widow. She introduced her sister Delia Jackson and commented that the only way they found out about the proposed land exchange was the article in the Wichita Eagle.

First Vice President Miller asked that it be noted for the record that she tried to contact the Garcia family. She said she spoke to a cousin, Jimmy Garcia, at the Office of Central Inspection, who

indicated that he would contact the rest of the family. Staff provided Mrs. Garcia a map of the proposed exchange.

Mrs. Garcia stated that she would need some time to think about the proposal before making any comments or rendering an opinion. Responding to a question about park development, Mrs. Garcia explained that the plan was to build a brick memorial structure at the park as a place for contemplation and meditation. She said a playground area was also planned on the parcels north of the floodway. She briefly mentioned project funding.

- Larry Ross – indicated that he was a former park board member. He referred to the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan adopted in 1989 and the Park and Open Space Plan adopted in 1996. He spoke briefly about the possibility of future bike/pedestrian path connections using drainage ways and canals such as the canal located adjacent to the parcel south of 25<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Francisco Banuelos – stated that he would like to build a house on the park parcel located off of North Park Place. He said he had spoken with the neighbors on either side of the parcel he was trying to acquire and they told him that they did not want to see the parcel used as a parking lot or park entrance. He said the property he was offering for trade made sense because people lived around it and that the children living in the apartments had no place to play. Responding to a question, Mr. Banuelos stated that he did not own the four-plexes in the area. He said kids play on the lot he was offering and that he felt the trade would be good for the neighborhood.

Bob Aldrich asked if there was other access to the north park property other than North Park Place. Director Kupper stated that there was a right-of-way easement from 26<sup>th</sup> Street North. Responding to a question, Mr. Banuelos explained that he bought land in the area twenty years ago. He said some people feel it is hard to live near a park because of all the strangers. Mrs. Garcia commented that she thought it was difficult to spread the park on three separate parcels.

Bob Aldrich said he has made up his mind and in his own opinion, the trade would not adequately benefit the neighborhood. He mentioned the close proximity of the 25<sup>th</sup> Street parcel to the bridge and the lack of access easement. There was brief discussion regarding how the property was originally platted. Director Kupper commented that he would not like to see Garcia Park split up any more than it already is.

Dennis Brunner asked about development plans for the north area of the park. Director Kupper commented that when the group approached him about donating land, he specifically requested that they attempt to acquire the lot on North Park Place for better access to the park area north of the canal. Bob Aldrich asked Director Kupper if his point of view had changed. Director Kupper responded technically speaking, no.

First Vice President Miller commented that she was torn because she could see benefits both ways. She said it might not be a good idea to divide the park up into separate parcels from a planning point of view; however, she could also see the concerns regarding establishing a parking lot and park entrance between the two residence on North Park Place. Director Kupper commented that since it was a neighborhood park, there probably wouldn't be a parking lot, just a path for handicapped accessibility. First Vice President Miller asked where current plans for development of the park were. She said she couldn't see where the parcel south of 25<sup>th</sup> Street was any more separated from the main memorial park than the parcels located north of the canal. She said after driving around the area she

thought the parcel requested by Mr. Banuelos could meet the need for good infill housing in the neighborhood. She said the new houses built in the area looked very nice and that people in the neighborhood deserved good infill housing. She added that citizens who live in the area should be consulted to see what they preferred in the way of playground facilities.

Dennis Brunner commented that due to recent past experience, he wanted to exhaust all possibilities for public input on the proposal prior to making a decision. He suggested that the Board delay any decision until after the DAB VI meeting.

**On motion by Brunner, second by Aldrich, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to delay a vote on the issue until the Board had received input from the DAB VI. The item was therefore deferred until the March meeting.**

First Vice President Miller clarified that the DAB VI meeting was Wednesday, February 18, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. at the Evergreen Recreation Center, 2700 N. Woodland.

2. **Use of Parking Lot – Leon Robinson Park.** Pastor Don Wharton, Dawson United Methodist Church, commented that a neighborhood group, in conjunction with the District III City Hall Neighborhood Assistant Vicki Mork, had established a committee to make recommendations for development of Leon Robinson Park. He said the committee has come up with about 9-10 suggestions for park development. He said one of those recommendations was to keep the parking lot located off of Larkin Street.

Pastor Wharton gave a brief history stating that the church has been at its present location for over fifty years. He said the church has a close association with Anderson School and it is also a member of the South City Neighborhood Association. He added that the church is being used for an increasing number of neighborhood meetings as well as a poling place and emergency shelter.

Pastor Wharton said there was a shortage of parking for Sunday worship services. He said off-street parking was also at a premium because there is heavy traffic on both Washington and Wassall Streets. He said the church council had asked him to inquire about the possibility of using the park's gated parking lot located off of Larkin Street. Staff referred to a map of Leon Robinson Park and the surrounding area.

First Vice President Miller asked how parishioners would get from the park parking lot to the church. Pastor Wharton stated that the church would like to cut a walk-through and install a gate in the chain link fence around the park. Bob Aldrich asked if the requested parking use was a temporary measure. Pastor Wharton said no, they would like to utilize the parking lot permanently.

Director Kupper explained that when Grieffenstein School was razed, the parking lot was left intact. He said the City would be willing to work with the group on installation of a sidewalk from the parking lot to the church. Pastor Wharton added that the neighborhood committee, along with other volunteer groups would be willing to provide landscaping as a buffer.

Glen Dey wanted to insure that the neighborhood committee was working with the group that was developing a design for the park. Pastor Wharton explained that the neighborhood committee was formed as a result of a meeting where a proposed park plan was presented to the neighborhood that was not very well received. He said the committee was formed to provide input to the design team.

Responding to a question, Pastor Wharton stated that the church planned to build a new parsonage on the vacant land located on the north end of the property. Bob Aldrich asked why that area couldn't be used for parking until the parsonage was built, and when was construction on the parsonage scheduled to start. Pastor Wharton indicated that he has not been able to persuade church members to use the area for parking. He stated that funds were currently being raised to build the parsonage and that they were scheduled to break ground within a year.

First Vice President Miller wanted to verify that use of the parking lot was just for overflow parking. Pastor Wharton responded yes, and said that an average of thirty or forty cars would utilize the parking lot on Sunday's and at other times. First Vice President Miller said she thought it made sense to share parking facilities when possible to eliminate the need for more paved parking areas.

There was brief discussion concerning the possibility of eventually paving the parking area; installing landscaping as an Eagle and/or Girl Scout project; and the church and other organizations forming a partnership to adopt the park.

**On motion by Brunner, second by Dey, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that staff proceed with an adopt a park agreement with the church and that church members be encouraged to use the parking lot at Leon Robinson Park.**

3. **Director's Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following item:

- Planeview and Linwood Park Land Exchanges. The appraisal of the proposed land exchange for Planeview Park had been received and forwarded to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for review. In addition, KDWP staff was scheduled to tour the sites exchanged for South Linwood Park. He said the \$200,000 funding for the skateboard park should be received within the next few weeks.

4. **Executive Session.**

**On motion by Miller, second by Aldrich, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board recess into executive session for consultation with legal counsel on matters privileged in the attorney-client relationship relating to Ordinance #125 and that the Board return from executive session at approximately 5:00 p.m.**

The Board returned from executive session at approximately 5:30 p.m. No action was necessary as a result of the executive session.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:35 p.m.

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Janet Miller, First Vice President

ATTEST:

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Maryann Crockett, Clerk  
Recording Secretary